

Statement on the Start of Afghanistan's Election Season

June 16, 2009

I congratulate the Afghan people on the start of your official election campaign period. On August 20 this year, the people of Afghanistan will choose a President to lead your nation and also elect Provincial councils to represent you locally.

The successful Presidential candidate will have a full agenda and high expectations. Afghan institutions must better serve the people. There must be full accountability and transparency, so that Afghans can see where their money is spent. Fighters who are ready to lay down their arms and embrace peace must be reintegrated, and Afghanistan needs to work with all her neighbours to promote security and opportunity in the region. In all of these efforts, Afghanistan's next President will have a partner in the United States.

Each nation gives life to democracy in its own way, grounded in the traditions of its own people. The United States does not support or oppose any particular Presidential or Provincial council candidate. Instead, we support the right of the people of Afghanistan to choose their own leaders. That is why we are working with Afghan electoral authorities and the United Nations to help Afghans ensure a credible, secure, and inclusive election process in which all candidates have fair access to media, can freely travel and campaign, and are comfortable with the integrity of the ballots cast on election day.

The United States seeks an enduring partnership with the Afghan people, not with any particular Afghan leader. That partnership will be dedicated to enabling the newly elected President and other officials to deliver governance, security, justice, and economic opportunity to all Afghans. That is the future that the Afghan people deserve, and that is the future that we will seek with the successful candidates and the people who elect them.

Categories: Statements by the President : Afghanistan :: Elections.

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